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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/236,897	01/26/1999	AKIHIRO KOMATSU	Q53086	9842

7590 02/13/2002
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EXAMINER

CROSS, LATOYA I

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
1743	11

DATE MAILED: 02/13/2002

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

MF 11

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)
	09/236,897	KOMATSU, AKIHIRO
	Examiner LaToya I. Cross	Art Unit 1743

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the corresponding address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 14 December 2001.

2a) This action is FINAL. 2b) This action is non-final.

3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4) Claim(s) 1,2,4-6,8 and 9 is/are pending in the application.

4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.

5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

6) Claim(s) 1,2,4-6,8 and 9 is/are rejected.

7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.

8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.

Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

11) The proposed drawing correction filed on _____ is: a) approved b) disapproved by the Examiner.

If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.

12) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

13) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).

a) All b) Some * c) None of:

1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

14) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).

a) The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.

15) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)	4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____
2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)	5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) _____	6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

1. The request filed on December 14, 2001 for a Continued Prosecution Application (CPA) under 37 CFR 1.53(d) based on parent Application No. 09/236,897 is acceptable and a CPA has been established. An action on the CPA follows. Claims 1, 2, 4-6, 8 and 9 are pending in the application.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC 103

2. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

3. Claims 1, 2, 4-6, 8 and 9 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over US Patent 4,296,069 to Smith et al (hereinafter Smith et al '069) in view of US Patent 4,053,381 to Hamblen et al (hereinafter Hamblen et al '381) and US Patent 5,814,277 to Bell et al (hereinafter Bell et al '277).

Smith et al '069 disclose an apparatus for processing analysis slides in a chemical analyzer. The apparatus comprises a meter device 18 for metering (spotting) sample fluid from sample cups on a sample tray onto an analysis slide of the colorimetric type. A second meter device is provided to deposit sample and reference fluid onto analysis slides of the potentiometer type (col. 3, lines 40-45). Incubators 22, 24 are provided to function with analysis means 23, 25 from measuring a change in the

analysis slides as a result of the fluid being deposited thereon (col. 4, lines 40-45).

Results from the analysis means **25** may be transmitted to a computer for appropriate calculations of concentration for various samples (col. 7, lines 53-58). Control circuits are provided which include thermistors for controlling the temperature of various heating elements (col. 4, lines 28-37). Also disclosed are housings **14, 16** where analysis slides are supplied and moved between the incubator **24** and analysis means **25**, via a slide transfer mechanism **128**. The position of the analysis slide is detected by means of an optical sensor (col. 6, lines 33-36).

Smith fails to teach 1) an ion activity measuring means, 2) a bar code reader for reading the position of the analysis elements and 3) a diluting unit to dilute the sample with diluent.

With respect to the ion activity measuring means, Smith et al '069 does disclose that analyzers comprising a pair of electrodes selective to ion activity may be used (col. 3, lines 12-22). Hamblen et al '381 teach ion selective electrodes for determining ion activity in liquids. Hamblen et al '381 teach that the use of such ion-selective electrodes in chemical analysis helps to minimize errors in the readings obtained.

Thus, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to use ion-selective electrodes such as those disclosed by Hamblen et al '381 in the chemical analyzer apparatus of Smith et al '069 to help in obtaining more accurate readings for the analyses performed.

With respect to the bar code reader for reading the position of each analysis element, Bell et al '277 teaches such in automatic chemical analyzers. At col. 7, lines

44-54, Bell et al '277 disclose that the position of the tray (analysis elements) can be determined by way of a bar code. Bell et al '277 also disclose that the bar code input results in less error and is more efficient than inputting directly into the processor either by keyboard or cursor.

With respect to the diluting unit as recited in claims 4 and 8, Bell et al '277 also teach an automatic chemical analyzer comprising sample and reagent containers 22, 24. Aliquots of sample and reagent are drawn up from the chambers and dispensed into test cells. Bell et al '277 disclose that the samples may be diluted automatically by dispensing buffer solution from reservoir 52 into the test cells. The automatic dilution of sample is disclosed as being advantageous when the sample concentration is too high or when limited amounts of sample are available for testing. Automated dilution also eliminates the potential for user error in sample dilution. See col. 9, lines 10-18.

Thus, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to include a bar code reader and dilution unit in the apparatus of Smith et al '069 to allow a greater number of assays to be performed and to reduce risk of user error in diluting the sample.

Therefore, for the reasons set forth above, Applicants' claimed invention is deemed to be obvious, within the meaning of 35 USC 103 in view of the teachings of Smith et al '069, Hamblen et al '381 and Bell et al '277.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to LaToya I. Cross whose telephone number is (703) 305-

7360. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Jill Warden, can be reached at (703) 308-4037. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is (703) 305-5408.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 308-0661.

LIC
February 11, 2002


Jill Warden
Supervisory Patent Examiner
Technology Center 1700